

# PREVENTION MATTERS

## Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month



May is Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month and focuses attention on the importance of preventing teen pregnancy, risky teen sexual activity and other consequences of teen sex.



*6 in 10 teens  
who have had sex  
say they wish  
they had waited...*

Some key facts from recent national studies:

- 6 in 10 teens who have had sex say they wish they had waited
- Nearly 3 in 10 girls in the US get pregnant at least once by age 20
- 48% of 9-12-grade teens have had sexual intercourse at least once

In Oregon:

- Oregon ranks 35<sup>th</sup> in the country for rates of reported teen pregnancy
- Oregon's teen pregnancy rate declined 46% between 1988 and 2005
- The estimated cost to Oregon taxpayers in 2004 for teen childbearing was \$602 million
- The statewide rate of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in 2009 was 334.9 per 100,000 people

And locally:

- 44% of Wallowa County youth in grades 8-12 report they have had sexual intercourse at least once, with the average age at first time being 14 years old; 42% have never had sexual intercourse
- 48% have been sexually active in their lifetime with the average age for first experience being 13 years old
- 17% say their parents/guardians "definitely" know and 72% say their parents/guardians "probably" know they are sexually active
- Wallowa County's 2009 rate of STDs was 59.2 per 100,000 people

*See TPP Month, page 2*



## Graduation Celebrations



Congratulation to all our Wallowa County high school and college graduates! Just like taking those first steps, learning to ride a bike, getting a driver's license, graduation is a milestone for youth and an important rite of passage.

Graduating from high school does not entitle youth to drink alcohol, nor have they 'earned' it. The most current research of the human brain shows that growth and development continue into the mid-twenties, with the last area of the brain to mature being the region responsible for judgment and decision-making.

Honor the graduates in your life without including alcohol. If you will be hosting or attending a graduation party, please give careful thought to the example you set – from

the refreshments you serve to the gifts you give. A party does not need to involve alcohol in order to be fun and celebrations do not require alcohol.

If you choose to host an alcohol-free graduation party, don't assume guests will know this, or that you prefer they not honor your graduate with a gift of alcohol. One way to let everyone know is to add special stickers to party invitations (see sample on page 2). And remember that Oregon laws prohibits anyone from allowing minors unaccompanied by their own parent or legal guardian to consume alcohol anywhere on their property.

As parents and adults in our community, help create a climate of celebration that is memorable and safe, for everyone.

*See Grads, page 2*

# WALLOWA VALLEY TOGETHER PROJECT

WVTP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing prevention services in the areas of substance use, underage drinking, problem gambling, suicide, teen pregnancy, bullying, and internet/tech & media safety.

## Mailing Address:

PO Box 431  
Enterprise, OR 97828

## Phone:

541.426.3277

## E-Mail:

wvtp@eoni.com

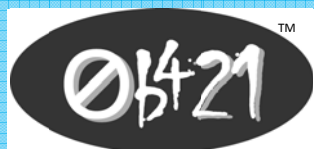


@ WVTogetherProject

## Visit Us on the Web:

<http://wvtp.org>

The *Prevention Matters* newsletters are available as PDF color documents on WVTP's website.



The *none before 21*<sup>TM</sup>  
underage drinking prevention  
and awareness campaign

## Grads from page 1



### Tips for Hosting Alcohol-Free Graduation Parties:

- ✓ Include your teen in the planning
- ✓ Set ground rules; explain to your teen your expectations and the consequences if rules are broken
- ✓ Decide on the party location within your home/yard and limit guests to this area
- ✓ Let guests know in advance of your expectations
- ✓ Do not allow guests to bring outside coolers, drinks, cups or bottles into the party
- ✓ Keep the party area well-lit
- ✓ Do not serve energy drinks
- ✓ Have other parents chaperone the party with you
- ✓ Make sure all chaperones are visible during the party and walk through all party areas frequently
- ✓ Do not allow teen guests to leave the party and return
- ✓ Accompany teen guests who need to get something from their car
- ✓ If you keep alcohol in your home, put the alcohol away in a secure location where it is not visible or accessible to guests
- ✓ Make sure all over-the-counter and prescription medications are not accessible

*Let guests know that your party is an alcohol-free event by adding stickers (sample, right) you make & personalize yourself to invitations, etc.*



*Our party is alcohol-free!*

## TPP Month from page 1



Many parents believe it is the family's responsibility to educate their children about sex. Unfortunately, the reality is that less than one-fifth of parents are actually doing this – or at least, their children don't perceive they are:

- Wallowa County youth in grades 7-12 reported the number one source of their information about sex is friends (23%), followed by parents (14%), media (13%), and "other" (10%).

If you're relying on your child to learn sex education at school, only 7% reported that school had been the main source of their information. There are several reasons for this, such as kids are curious about sex and talking about it with their peers long before it is ever discussed in the classroom. And there is the 'education' by the media – TV, movies, music, internet, books, magazines, advertising, etc.

Sex is one of those subjects we need to talk with our children about frequently – it's not a one-time conversation. And the younger your child is when you begin, the easier it is to continue the conversation throughout their pre-teen and adolescent years.

Talk with your child about your family's values and beliefs around sexual health. Help your child identify early on what his/her reasons are for choosing to remain abstinent, and discuss these from time to time. Most likely the reasons will change as your child gets older. Some reasons other youth have identified for choosing to remain abstinent include avoiding STDs; respect for self and the other person; not wanting to risk being rejected; faith/religious beliefs; goals for the future; personal reputation; not ready to be a parent; and not wanting to deal with the pressure. When youth are able to identify the reasons for their decision – and have personal ownership for it – they are more likely to follow it.

